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Amlodipine

Brand names of amlodipine

- Lotrel [CD]
- Norvasc

Amlodipine is a member of the class of drugs known as [calcium](#) channel blockers. As the name suggests, these medications hinder the transportation of calcium to the soft muscle [cells](#) that form the inner layer of the coronary arteries as well as other arteries in our body. Calcium is vital for the contraction of the muscles and, hence, blocking the transportation of calcium helps to loosen up the muscles of the arteries and also widens the coronary arteries as well as the other arteries in the body. As it works to loosen up the coronary arteries, amlodipine helps to avoid chest [pain](#) (also known as [angina](#)) caused by the spasms of the coronary artery. In addition, when the muscles lining the arteries in other places of the body are relaxed, it results in lowering of the blood pressure, which, in turn, lessens the burden on the heart in pumping [blood](#) to the different parts of the body. At the same time, when the burden on the heart is lessened, it also reduces the muscles' requirement for [oxygen](#) and additionally assists in preventing angina in patients suffering from ailments related to the [coronary arteries](#). It is worth mentioning here that amlodipine should only be used by adults and children above the age of 6 years.

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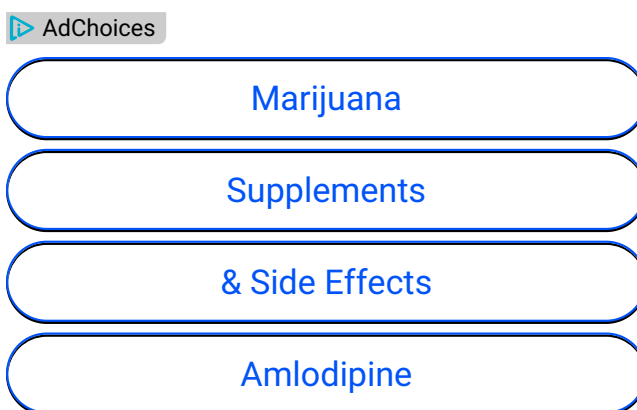


Amlodipine may be used individually or in conjunction with other drugs to cure [high blood pressure](#)

[\(hypertension\)](#) as well as prevent chest pain (angina). When this medication is taken on a regular basis, it helps in controlling chest pain, but it is not able to end chest pain when it has already begun. Therefore, it is important for your physician to prescribe another drug that will help you when you are having a chest pain.

Things you need to tell your physician before taking amlodipine

Prior to starting treatment with amlodipine, it is essential for you to talk to your physician and tell him/ her whether you have [allergic reactions](#) to amlodipine, any of its ingredients or any other medication. In addition, tell your physician or pharmacist regarding the prescription and over-the-counter medications, herbal products, dietary supplements and vitamins that are already being taken by you. Also tell your physician about your medical history, especially if you have or have ever had any [liver ailment](#) or a [heart failure](#).



While it is yet to be ascertained whether amlodipine is harmful for the fetus, it is important for women intending to take this medicine to tell their physician if they are pregnant or planning to get [pregnant](#). As it is also yet to be ascertained whether amlodipine passes onto the breast milk or can harm a nursing baby, women who are [breast-feeding](#) should consult their physician before using this medicine.

In case you are already taking any other beta-blocking medication (for instance, Blocadren, Betapace, Coreg, Corgard, InnoPran, Inderal, Lopressor, Normodyne, Tenomin, Trandate, Tenoretic, Toprol, Zebeta and so on), you should never discontinue taking the medication all of a sudden, but should first talk to your physician before you stop taking the drug. Before discontinuing with the drug completely, you may need to stop taking it gradually. It may be noted that if you stop taking any beta-blocker suddenly, it may result in grave heart problems, which amlodipine is unable to prevent.

Usage

Amlodipine is used individually or along with other medicines for treating high blood pressure (hypertension). As this medication helps to lower the blood pressure, it aids in averting [heart attacks](#), [strokes](#) and [ailments](#) related to the [kidneys](#). Amlodipine is a drug that is known as a calcium channel blocker and it helps to loosen up the blood vessels to augment [blood circulation](#).

In addition to treating high blood pressure, amlodipine is also used to avoid explicit types of chest pain (angina). This medicine may also possibly assist in enhancing the patient's capability to undertake work-outs and, at the same time, lessen the rate of angina attacks. However, this medication should never be used to cure angina attacks or chest pains when they have already started. You may use some other medication (for instance, sublingual nitro-glycerine) to provide relief from chest pains as per the recommendations of your physician.

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How to use amlodipine

Amlodipine is available in tablet form, which is taken orally. Normally, this medication is taken once daily. In order to avoid missing a dose of amlodipine, it is advisable that you take the medicine around the same time daily. It is important for people taking this medicine to follow the instructions on their prescription label with care, and if they do not understand anything, they ought to get it clarified from their physician or pharmacist. It is important that you take this medicine strictly according to the direction of your physician. Never take this medicine in excess or less dose than what is prescribed by your physician. In case you miss a dose of amlodipine, take it as soon as you remember. However, if it is already time for the next dose, skip the earlier one.

It is likely that initially your physician will begin with a low dose for you and slowly increase the dose.

It is important to note that while amlodipine is effective in controlling high blood pressure (hypertension) and chest pain (angina), it cannot cure them. Even if you start feeling better after taking amlodipine, continue taking the medication and do not discontinue the drug without consulting your physician.

How amlodipine works

Amlodipine works by obstructing the transportation of calcium to the heart cells as well as the soft cells of the muscles lining the arterial walls. This action of amlodipine loosens up the blood vessels, making them wider and, thereby, lowers the [blood pressure](#). At the same time, dilation of the blood vessels enhances the supply of blood to the heart, which, in turn, reduces the overall burden on the heart vis-à-vis pumping blood to the different parts of the body.

Side effects

Serious:

- [dizziness](#) upon getting up from a lying or [sitting](#) position
- increased angina attacks
- shortness of breath
- slow heartbeat
- weakness

Common:

- ankles and feet swelling
- decreased urination caused by water retention
- [headache](#)
- weight gain

Less common:

- abdominal pain
- [fatigue](#)
- dizziness
- drowsiness
- [nausea](#)
- [palpitations](#)

Possible interactions

Herbal medicines or minerals:

Specific herbal medications and/ or minerals may interact with the drug amlodipine and, hence, they should not be used in conjunction. For instance, the use of the Chinese herb [ginseng](#) may possibly raise the blood pressure, thereby negating the benefits of amlodipine. In addition, using herbs like [hawthorn](#), [Siberian ginseng](#) root, [ma huang](#), [saw palmetto](#), [licorice](#) and [goldenseal](#) may result in high blood pressure. On the other hand, calcium, [Indian snakeroot](#) and [garlic](#) are likely to assist in bringing down the blood pressure. Hence, it is advisable that you consult your physician prior to including any new herbal medicine in your routine medical regimen.

Foods:

Consumption of grapefruit as well as [grapefruit](#) juice enhances the effects of amlodipine. Therefore, people taking this medication should keep away from consuming grapefruit for at least an hour after taking amlodipine. In addition, they should also shun excessive [salt](#) intake.

Alcohol:

People taking amlodipine should exercise caution while consuming alcoholic beverages. [Alcohol](#) has the potential to further worsen their condition by facilitating rapid decline in blood pressure.

Tobacco smoking:

[Nicotine](#) may possibly decrease the efficiency of amlodipine and, hence, people taking this medicine should avoid [smoking](#).

Marijuana smoking:

Smoking [marijuana](#) may possibly blunt the efficiency of amlodipine and also result in mild to restrained enhancement in chest pain (angina). In addition, it may possibly also cause alterations in electrocardiogram, thereby confusing the reading.

Exposure to heat:

People who are using amlodipine should essentially exercise caution while coming in contact with heat. In fact, being in hot environments may increase the medication's blood pressure-lowering properties of amlodipine. When people taking amlodipine are exposed to heat, they are likely to experience debility and dizziness.

Exposure to sun:

There have been a number of reports regarding photo toxicity when people taking amlodipine have been exposed to the sun for long. Hence, people who are taking this medication should exercise caution when going outdoors during the day.

Heavy exercise or exertion:

Taking amlodipine is likely to enhance the capability of the patient to become additionally active devoid of experiencing any chest pain (angina). Although they are able to undertake mild work-outs while on medication with amlodipine, they also need to exercise caution.

Discontinuation

It is always advisable that people taking amlodipine should never stop taking it suddenly, but should lessen the dose of the medication gradually before discontinuing with it completely. While you are decreasing the dose of amlodipine prior to discontinuing it, you need to observe if rebound angina develops.

Storage instructions

Amlodipine should always be stored at room temperature and at a place which is free from light and dampness. As the temperatures for storing this medication vary depending on the different manufacturers, it is advisable that you consult your pharmacist for additional information in this regard. Never ever keep this

medication in your bathroom. In addition, you should essentially keep all medications in a place that is beyond the reach of children and pets.

When you do not need the medication any longer or the medication has lapsed its expiry date, do not dispose off it by flushing it down your toilet or pouring it down a drain. It is important to always adopt safe disposal methods when the product has expired or you do not require it any more. It would be best to seek the advice of your pharmacist or any neighbourhood disposal company regarding the safe disposal of the unwanted product.

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